

and, except for some vaccines, few treatments for viral infections exist to date.

With regard to infectious diseases, a major goal of the IIDC is to discover, characterize and validate novel virulence factors and toxins from infectious agents, working closely with our bioinformatics group who annotate (attempt to assign function based on the DNA sequence) the rapidly expanding number of pathogen genome sequences. These combined studies facilitate the discovery of novel but conserved pathways that may be validated as targets for broad-spectrum antibiotics. Complementary strategies will be developed to produce drug-like compounds for further development, including High-Throughput Screening (HTS), 'in silico' screening, and the development and application of NMR-based fragment approaches (the Institute hosts "The San Diego Chemical Library Screening Center", one of 5 such centers nationwide). The IIDC will continue its well-funded studies of the most likely agents of bioterrorism, including anthrax (*Bacillus anthracis*), smallpox (*Variola virus*), and plague (*Yersinia pestis*); but it will also expand its focus to the study of emerging diseases such as SARS, West Nile and Dengue Viruses, as well as preparing countermeasures to treat a possible influenza pandemic—should avian flu strain H5N1 gain the ability to transmit directly from person to person.

A major new focus of the IIDC will be to understand and exploit host responses to infection. Human cells provide the never-ending backdrop in a contest between host-defense molecules and pathogen virulence factors that seek to subvert the host's innate and adaptive immune responses. Identifying the players and mechanisms of the natural host responses, many of which are common to a broad range of infections, may provide novel (host-targeted) leads for broad-spectrum therapeutics, the exciting possibility of naturally boosting innate immunity, as well as the discovery of novel adjuvants for vaccine design. Vaccine technology has developed little in the past 50 years. A high priority will therefore be the development of novel vaccine methodologies which employ robust single-chain antigen-adjuvant combinations that facilitate rapid production and modification in the face of engineered or mutant pathogens.

The IIDC is well positioned in that it already has much of the infrastructure in place to generate novel therapeutic leads; shortly, with the opening of our new facility in Orlando, FL we will have the additional capability of developing these leads through medicinal chemistry and pharmacology to phase I trials, the latter in collaboration with our clinical partners in Florida.

Additional funding made possible through this process to the IIDC will enable the expansion of our Center into a number of critical areas. Priorities include recruitment of new faculty members and their programs working in the fields of innate immunity, microbiology, and medicinal chemistry. Recruitment into these currently underrepresented areas within our Center will complement our existing expertise and further expedite the development of novel therapeutics.

Leveraged Funds—Based on the Burnham Institute for Medical Research's past successful record of leveraging seed funds, we estimate that \$3 million for additional scientists through this request will result in \$30 million in

additional grant funding for the next 10 years at the BIMR.

Current/Future/Matching Funding—Private philanthropy for the San Diego, CA area has contributed to the current research work ongoing at Burnham's IIDC. Since BIMR scientists started focusing on the important area of research, the IIDC has secured nearly \$40,000,000 in competitive federal grants from a number of sources including the DoD and the NIAID. BIMR researchers and their research are very well respected throughout these federal agencies. Researchers in the IIDC will continue to seek federal grants through the traditional competitive process this year through funding opportunities available from the DoD and the NIAID.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF MERIT STUDENTS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of 39 distinguished high school students from Michigan's Eighth District. I was proud to award the Congressional Medal of Merit to these students during a ceremony at Michigan's State Capitol on May 9, 2008.

These graduating seniors were nominated by their schools for the prestigious Congressional Medal of Merit. To be nominated, each student demonstrated exemplary citizenship and academic excellence throughout their high school careers.

These young men and women have demonstrated an outstanding sense of service to their peers, education and community. Honoring their achievements with the Congressional Medal of Merit is a privilege and I congratulate each of them along with their parents, family, teachers and community. Together, this group of students represents the best and brightest America has to offer: Amber Barber, Tyler Bengel, Kristin Boozer, Michael Brendel, Sarah Bush, Chris Case, Kaitlyn Charette, Christina Clarke, Bethany Davis, Nathan Feldpausch, Preston Frazier, Mariah Frey, Brittney Fuller, Kristy Gould, Effrem Grettenberger, Carolyn Hamilton, Robert Hindy, Jessica Holberg, Priya Karve, Jason Klepal, Kristin Kotarba, Audrey Kramer, Kiley Kyser, Kavina Marshall, Alexandra McGregor, Victoria Miller, Christine Norton, Guillermo Peralta, Ariana Pierce, Jacob Price, McKenzie Rowley, Thomas Sanday, Eric Stants, Marco Tori, Jacquelyn Verley, Christie Wilkins, Brennan Woell, Lo-Hua Yuan, Mitchell Zajac.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me in honoring these exceptional students. May they know that this Nation is greatly appreciative of their service and dedication, and wishes them the best in all their future endeavors.

HONORING CONGRESSIONAL CERTIFICATE OF MERIT RECIPIENT SYDNEY MOORE

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the successes and achievements of Sydney Moore, who has received the Congressional Certificate of Merit award at Westwood High School in Austin, Texas. Sydney has shown exceptional leadership qualities through her involvement in numerous activities which makes her a great candidate for this award.

Sydney is a wholesome, bright, and energetic young woman. She has shown strong leadership abilities at home, in clubs, and in sports. She has earned the trust of her peers by being elected to a variety of positions on and off of the field, including Student Council and Miracle League.

I congratulate Sydney Moore for her achievements in school and in her community and am proud to represent such talented and dedicated people in the 31st District of Texas.

HEROES EARNINGS ASSISTANCE AND RELIEF TAX ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6081, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act and to commend Speaker PELOSI and Chairman RANGEL for their perseverance in getting this important bill to the President's desk.

H.R. 6081 includes vital tax provisions that help military families facing significant financial hardships due to extended deployments. According to a Department of Defense survey, 55 percent of married National Guardsmen and Reservists suffer a loss of income when they are called to active duty. The Heart Act helps to fix this problem by providing a tax credit of up to \$4,000 for small businesses that continue to pay National Guard and Reserve employees when they are called to serve.

This important bill makes permanent several IRS provisions that relieve economic hardships as a result of military service including the Earned Income Tax Credit for families of soldiers in combat. H.R. 6081 also allows more military families to be eligible for the economic stimulus rebates and makes it easier for veterans to become homeowners through low-interest loans.

The Heart Act is fully offset and will not increase our national debt. It pays for these tax breaks by closing an offshore loophole that allows government contractors, who receive millions or billions in taxpayers' dollars, to set up companies in foreign countries to avoid paying Social Security and Medicare taxes. For example, defense contractor KBR, has reportedly avoided paying over \$100 million in Social Security and Medicare taxes by creating